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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a five-session course entitled "Program Evaluation," which was taught via interactive television in the summer of 2002 to 68 doctoral and master's students in 5 of 6 locations throughout New Mexico. Students received a 4-hour lecture and then participated in off-line activities directed by the instructor. Problems in distance education delivery and some recommended solutions are provided. These include technical delivery problems related to the interactive television medium. Six appendixes contain supplemental information about the course, including some examples of student projects. (SLD)

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Teaching Program Evaluation on Interactive Television

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Teaching Program Evaluation on Interactive Television

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Abstract

A five-session course entitled, "Program Evaluation" was taught via Interactive Television during the summer of 2002 to 68 Doctoral and Masters students in 6 locations throughout the state of New Mexico. Five of the locations received the instruction though Interactive Television. Students received a 4-hour lecture session and then participated in off-line activities directed by the instructor. Problems in distance education delivery and recommended solutions are provided.

Introduction

We would like to share with you our experience teaching a course on Program Evaluation using Interactive Television(ITV). First we will present the context of the course, then problems related to technology, and proposed solutions.

Context of the course

A new doctoral program in Community College Administration was initiated in January 2002. The program was designed to be delivered entirely in a distance education mode. The delivery of the program was promised to be a mix of ITV, WebCT, phone, e-mail, and travel by faculty to the students across the state of New Mexico. See Appendix A for the program description.

NMSU faculty marketed the program during the summer of 2001, perhaps a little too successfully. A total of 62 students were accepted into the program and began their

doctoral work in January of 2002. (In addition, 6 students were accepted into the masters program and agreed to take the same courses.) They came to the main campus of NMSU in Las Cruces for a two-day orientation, and the plan was for them to return in about three years to walk across the stage. The remainder of the courses were to be delivered by distance education to the five sites in Appendix B.

Students take two courses every semester and three in the summer. Most of them were released from their duties for Friday afternoon. Courses were offered Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, each 4 hours long. Because there were 5 designated course times (5 * 4 = 20), instructors had to develop activities that supported instruction for the other 25 hours that normally constitute a 3-hour course. These activities had to document student participation.

Why us, Lord?

We are not based in the Educational Administration department, but have a lot of ties to the department. All of their doctoral students take the 3 course statistics sequence, as well as the dissertation writing course from McNeil. He plays racquetball twice a week with the professor that originated the idea, Dr. Roy Rodriguez. When he indicated that they had a Program Evaluation course in the curriculum, he volunteered Steinhauser and himself to teach it for the following reasons:

1. He was in the late stages of writing a textbook on Program Evaluation (with Isadore Newman), and this would be an impetus to finish the draft.

2. The course would give them a chance to try out the text with a live audience.

3. The focus of the text is on the collaboration of the Program Administrator with the evaluator, a focus that likely would be of interest to those studying to be Community College Administrators.

4. McNeil wanted to see what ITV was all about.

5. McNeil and Steinhauser didn't have much else to do in the summer of 2002.

What were the facilities like?

Instruction occurred in a room in the Business Building on the other side of campus. The room contained an overhead projector, computer for Power Point presentations, video equipment, 4 Televisions, and camera that would follow the instructor or switch to someone

talking in the room. (See Appendix C.) There were 4 students in the room, 3 driving from their residence 70 miles away. They could look at the instructor, or one of the TVs (Instructor TV in Appendix C) that contained the feed that all the other students across the state saw. The other TV (identified as Remote TV in Appendix C) focused on the student (wherever in the state) who was currently speaking, or who had last spoken.

The Assistant at the back of the room, either McNeil or Steinhauser depending on who was teaching at the time, had collaborated on program evaluations for the past 4 years.

After McNeil attempted to teach for 4 straight hours for the first class session, Dr. Steinhauser was invited to share the teaching responsibilities, which he did admirably. The basic plan after the first disastrous night was for McNeil and Steinhauser to alternate 1 hour lectures. Since Steinhauser had taught math at the high school level for many years, he was comfortable with the assignment, and was well received by the students.

What did the students have to do?

Students were asked to read the relevant chapters before class. After class they had 2-4 activities that were to be completed either individually or in teams. (Teams had been formed the previous semester and had worked out well.) Completed activities were submitted over the Web on WebCT. Appendix D contains 5 activities, one individual and four team activities. Activities 3.2 and 7.4, writing and responding to an RFP for an evaluation, were major activities for the course, and required the students to incorporate many concepts covered during the course. They were also very practical assignments, ones that they might refer to in their subsequent employment.

How were the students evaluated?

Appendix E contains the required activities and the percent assigned to each. Note that there was a combination of individual and team projects, a multiple choice exam, and a short answer exam. The short answer exam is in Appendix F. All exams and activities were submitted over the Web using WebCT.

So, what did we learn?

1. ITV has a lot of technical problems. First, we started on time only once. Even though the two technicians started trying to connect the five sites an hour before class started, difficulties always occurred. Usually we started with less than the five sites, and often

would lose sites during the four hours. The next to last class actually started 1 1/2 hours late and we still were not connected to one site. The day of the last class, the entire lower third of New Mexico lost electricity three hours before class was to start. All radio reports were that power would be off for a long time. Since we needed power to transmit, we tried to come up with alternative plans. Since this was the last class, and it was close to the end of the summer, we decided to conduct the class via telephone conference. When we arrived at the Business Building, we were pleasantly surprised to discover that it was one of the few buildings on campus that had its own power source. So we were able to transmit (to all but one site).

Even when sites were connected, problems arose. Transmission was over phone lines, so the image looked something like the TV phones from Afghanistan--delayed voice transmission and jerky movements. Consequently, we used a lot of overheads. The overheads didn't move much and no lips were to be seen. This, though, was a different way of teaching. On the other hand, those overheads were easy to send via WebCT to each student.

2. Meeting only 5 times requires a lot of planning, and a lot of material to be condensed into each session. Presenters need to be "up" for each session, and students lose a lot if they miss one session. Videos were made of each session, but distribution to each of the 5 sites and then to the 68 students took time.

3. More program evaluation examples at the Community College level would probably have been instructive and appreciated. Most of our evaluation experience has been at the preschool and early elementary levels. We have conducted evaluations at other levels, including one at the Community College level. Even though most evaluators realize that tools and techniques can be easily transferred to various levels and content areas, students learning evaluation may not understand that, and probably appreciate more examples form their own field.

4. The next course we teach in the distance education format will not be via ITV.

APPENDIX A

Proposed Program of Study

Spring 2002

- Community College Administration
- Community College Leadership

Summer 2002

- Finance and Funding for Community Colleges
- Program Evaluation

Fall 2002

- Higher Education Law
- Facilities and Capital Planning

Spring 2003

- Statistics
- Action Research

Summer 2003

- Dissertation Writing
- Student Services for Community Colleges

Fall 2003

- Internship
- Doctoral Dissertation

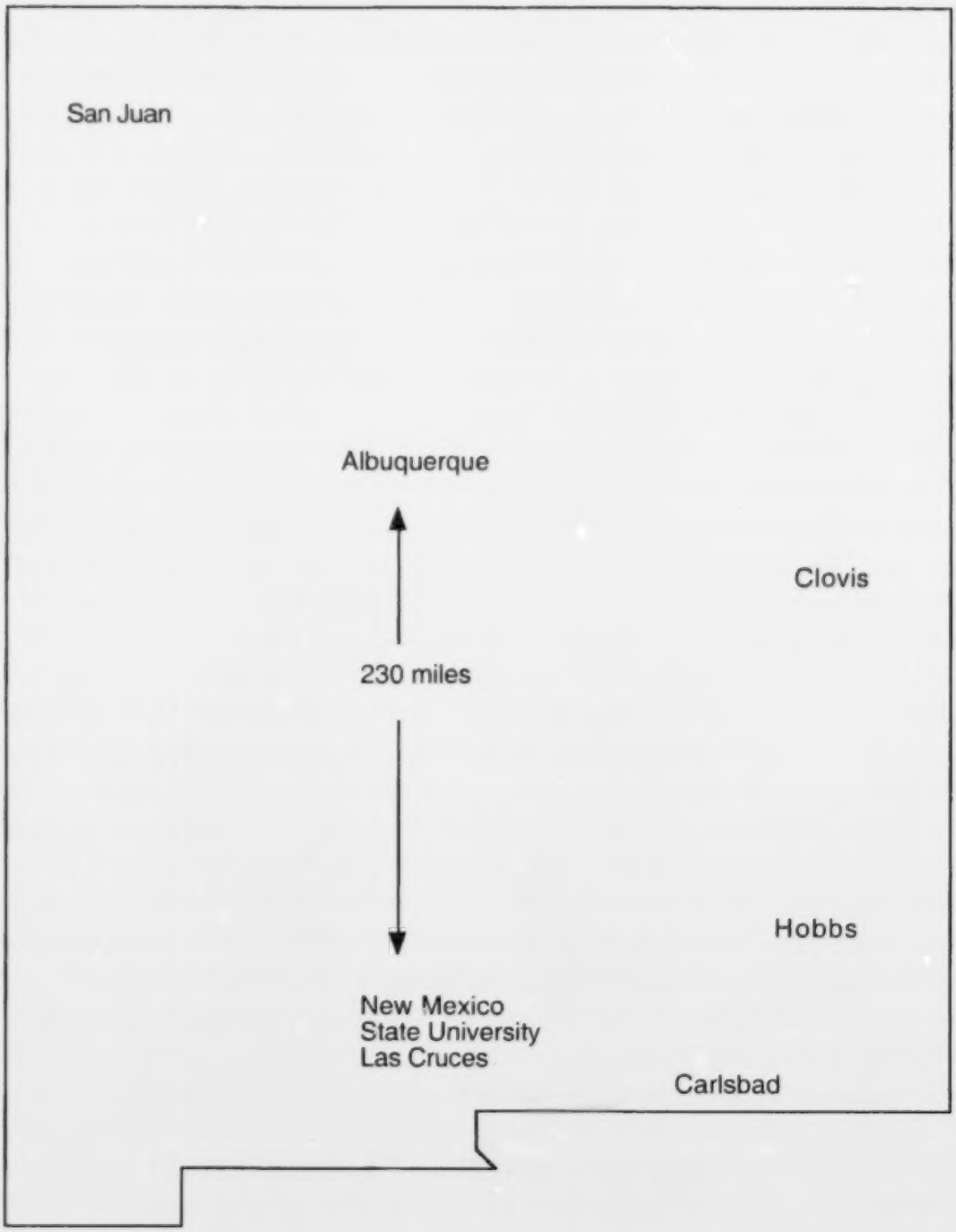
Spring 2004

- Internship
- Doctoral Dissertation

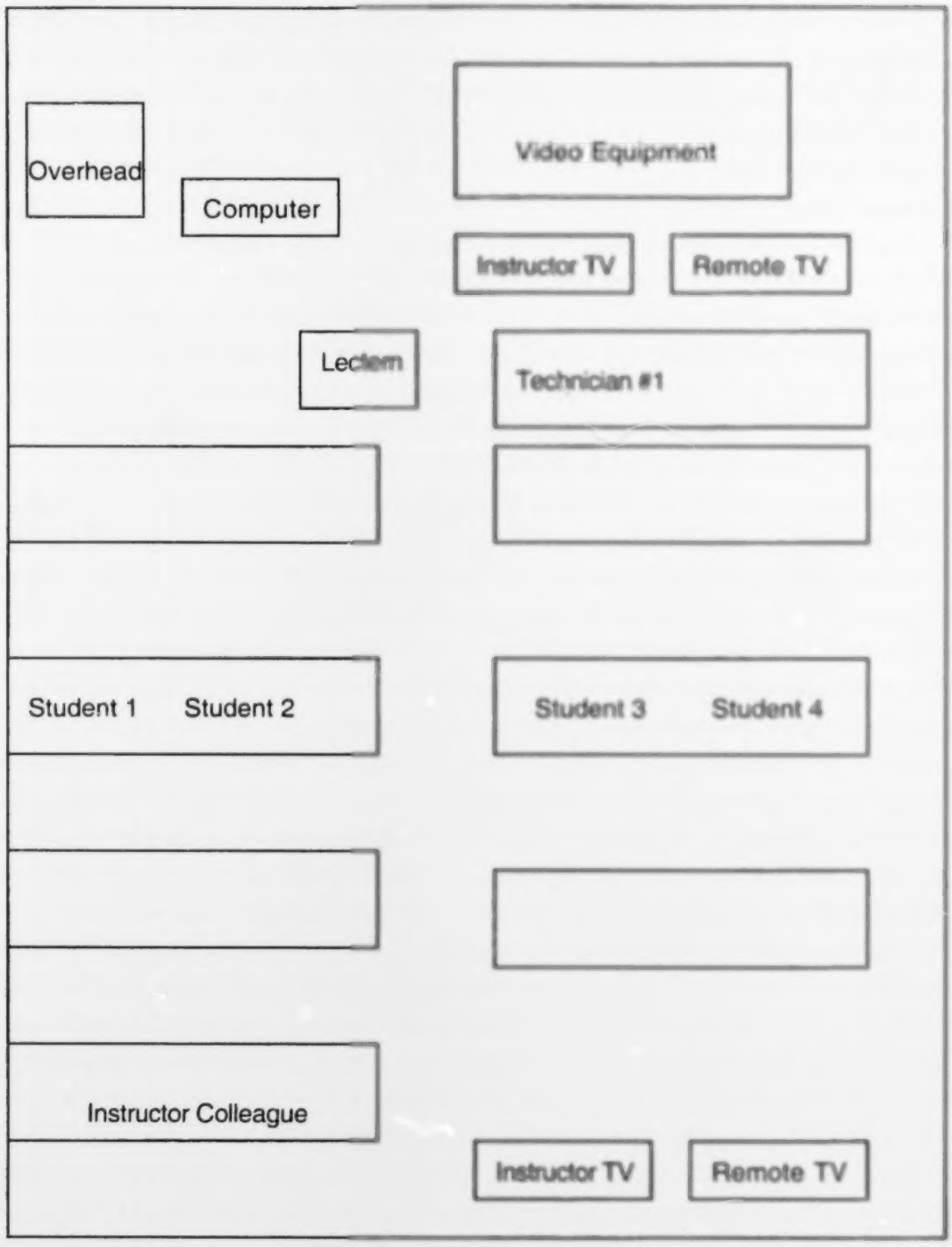
Summer 2004

- Doctoral Dissertation

APPENDIX B
Location of Distance Education Sites in New Mexico



APPENDIX C Schematic of Classroom



APPENDIX D

Examples of Activities that Students Turned In

Activity 2.3 How can Stakeholders can assist in the evaluation?

Product: How Stakeholders can assist in the evaluation.

Time	Process
10 min	1. As a team, make a list of the potential Stakeholders in your group evaluation. List at most 6 of these Stakeholders on the top row of below.
30 min	2. As a team, review the Table of Contents for chapters 3-8 to get an idea of what the 39 tasks entail. Indicate (with a Y for Yes) the tasks you think the various Stakeholders could assist with. Indicate with a N those tasks that the Stakeholder would not likely assist with.

Total Time = 40 minutes

Activity 3.2 Writing an RFP.

Product: #1 Each team will develop an RFP.
#2 Each student will develop an RFP.

Time	Process
5 min	1. In teams, review the RFP in Exhibit 10.5.
50 min	2. In teams, modify Exhibit 10.5 to meet the needs of the evaluation assigned to the team. (Only the INTRODUCTION and SCOPE sections need revisions. Make cosmetic changes only on the other sections.)
	3. Submit the RFP to the instructor within two weeks. Instructor will give feedback and assign the RFP to another team at your site.
	4. Assignment for next class. Each student will develop an RFP for one program, course, activity, or instructional technique. Other possibilities can be discussed with the instructor. This RFP will be submitted one week before the second class The RFP may be edited and then will be assigned to another student at your site.

Total time = 55 minutes

Activity 1.2 Specific differences between Program Director and Evaluator.

Product: Profile on traits that may differentiate a Program Director from and Evaluator.

Time	Activity
10 min	1. Rate yourself on each of the 15 traits below.
15	2. Discuss with your team what each of the traits means. 1 minute per trait.
05	3. Revise your rating, if necessary.
	4. After class, submit your rating within one week.

Total Time = 30 minutes

Program Director						Evaluator
1. Program survival	—	—	—	—	—	1. Innovation
2. Status quo	—	—	—	—	—	2. Change for better
3. Defend and believe in program	—	—	—	—	—	3. Look at program skeptically
4. Bureaucrat	—	—	—	—	—	4. Scientist
5. Person of immediate action	—	—	—	—	—	5. Person of deliberation
6. Content with short, periodic reports	—	—	—	—	—	6. Wants comprehensive report
7. Willing to sacrifice accuracy	—	—	—	—	—	7. Lives for detailed accuracy
8. Politically sensitive	—	—	—	—	—	8. Not sensitive to political issues
9. Pragmatic	—	—	—	—	—	9. Realistic
10. Values people	—	—	—	—	—	10. Values ideas
11. Expedient	—	—	—	—	—	11. Reveres truth and knowledge
12. Concerned with current program	—	—	—	—	—	12. Interested in replicable results
13. Interested in viewpoints from everybody	—	—	—	—	—	13. Focus is on participants
14. Focus on whose jobs to retain	—	—	—	—	—	14. Focus on which jobs to retain
15. Prefers verbal reports	—	—	—	—	—	15. Prefers written reports

Activity 5.1 Concerns regarding instrument selection.

Product: List of possible evaluation information for the team evaluation.

In your teams brainstorm the possible kinds of information from Exhibit 5.2 that could be incorporated into the evaluation. Particularly discuss additional unobtrusive measures and try to include them. Then discuss for each measure:

1. Financial viability
2. Burden on respondents
3. Disruption to program
4. Potential gain from the information
5. New insight as contrasted with degree of redundancy of that information

Time	Process
10 min	1. Within teams, review the 5 evaluation questions
30 min	2. Each team member takes responsibility for one of the above discussion areas and thinks about or talks with other members about the measure.
25 min	3. Present to the class the team's choice for evaluation instruments. 5 minutes on each evaluation question.

Total time = 65 minutes

Activity 7.4 Revised draft of the Team Evaluation Plan.

Product: Revised draft of the Team Evaluation Plan.

Time	Process
5	1. In teams, discuss how the plan should be revised and expanded, based on the information already read and presented in class.
45	2. In teams, write a revised draft of the Team Evaluation Plan. Realize that it will be modified in future classes.
	3. Submit the revised draft plan to the instructor within one week. Instructor will give feedback.
	4. Assignment for next class. Continue to revise and expand your own individual plan that has been assigned to you.

Total time = 50 minutes

APPENDIX E

Required Tasks and Percent of Grade

Task #1 Required, but not graded. Each team will develop an RFP, modeling the one in Exhibit 10.5. Due two weeks after the first class.

Task #2 20% of grade. Each team will respond to an assigned RFP. The evaluation plan will be refined and expanded during the course. The plan will be turned in at least one week before each class after the June 7 class, and feedback will be provided before the class. The final version will be turned in one week after the last class.

Task #3 5% of grade. Each student will develop an RFP, modeling the one in Exhibit 10.5. This individual RFP is due two weeks after the first class.

Task #4 35% of grade. Each student will respond to another student's RFP. The response will be developed during the course (using as a model the evaluation plan being developed by each team). The individual evaluation plan due the last class.

Task # 5 20% of the grade. Activities will be assigned each class, and selected ones will be forwarded to the instructor and graded.

Task # 6 20% of the grade. Final exam. Multiple choice and short answer.

APPENDIX F

EMD 689 Final Summer 2002 1 hour

1. Relate the following quote to program evaluation: "Managers must have the discipline not to keep pulling up the flowers to see if their roots are healthy." by R. Townsend

2. Discuss the differences between Needs Assessment and Baseline in terms of Timing, Generality, and Involvement of Stakeholders.

3. Why might the evaluation plan not emphasize evaluating training the first year of a five-year program?

4. What are two disadvantages of open-ended questions?

5. Many educators say that there is more within group variation than between group variation. Discuss this statement in terms of evaluating a course that involves 6 teachers.

6. How could a high degree of mortality seriously affect the validity of an evaluation study?

7. In what way is ethics an issue in selecting your sources of information?

8. Discuss the negative aspects of an "inside hire."

9. Why do you think that "belief in cause and effect" is a requisite trait of an Evaluator?

10. What are unobtrusive measures," They are not used very often. Why do you think that is so?

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